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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: ELAB, UK
SUBJECT: AUEW ELECTS "MODERATE" PRESIDENT

SUMMARY: THE RESULT OF THE FINAL ROUND OF POSTAL BALLOTING IN THE CAMPAIGN TO ELECT A SUCCESSOR TO HUGH SCANLON AS PRESIDENT OF THE GIANT AMALGAMATED UNION OF ENGINEERING WORKERS (AUEW) WAS ANNOUNCED MAY 2. THE RESULT WAS A VICTORY FOR THE OUTSPOKEN, ANTI-COMMUNIST "MODERATE" CANDIDATE, TERRY DUFFY, BY AN UNEXPECTEDLY WIDE MARGIN. DUFFY'S ELECTION SURPRISED EVEN HIS SUPPORTERS IN AND OUT OF THE AUEW WHO WERE CONCERNED BY SOME OF HIS INEPT CAMPAIGN UTTERANCES AND THE PRESS BUILD-UP OF WRIGHT AS AN EFFECTIVE, SHREWD NEGOTIATOR. DUFFY POLLED 169,168 VOTES AGAINST LEFT-WINGER BOB WRIGHT'S 122,251 - A MAJORITY OF 46,917 VOTES. OF THE 902,258 MEMBERS ELIGIBLE, A TOTAL OF 32.3 PERCENT ACTUALLY VOTED. THIS IS AN UNUSUALLY LARGE TURNOUT, EVEN UNDER THE NEW POSTAL BALLOTING PROCEDURES, FOR A TRADE UNION ELECTION. THE DEFEAT OF WRIGHT WAS PART OF A MORE GENERAL SWING TO THE RIGHT WHICH REMOVES THE LONG-STANDING, HAIR-BREADTH "RIGHT-LEFT" BALANCE ON THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. THE NEW BALANCE ON THE EXECUTIVE IS SIX TO ONE IN FAVOR OF THE MODERATES -- THE ONLY
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"LEFT-WINGER" LEFT BEING THE 30-YEAR VETERAN RAY BIRCH, WHO SEVERAL YEARS AGO SPLIT WITH THE CPGB TO SET UP HIS OWN "MAOIST" SPLINTER. THE ELECTION OF DUFFY WILL ENCOURAGE OTHER MODERATE TRADE UNIONISTS AND IS LIKELY TO HAVE AN IMPORTANT INFLUENCE ON THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IN THE LONGER TERM; THE AUEW, AS THE SECOND LARGEST UNION IN THE COUNTRY, WIELDS CONSIDERABLE POWER THROUGH

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A WIDE RANGE OF INDUSTRY AND BRITISH ORGANIZED LABOR. DUFFY IS COMMITTED TO EXAMINING THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE UNION, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE POSITION OF THE COMMUNIST-LED WHITE COLLAR SECTION AUEW (TASS). IT IS ALSO EXPECTED THAT DUFFY WILL ATTEMPT TO ENLARGE THE UNION BY AMALGAMATIONS WITH OTHER BODIES ORGANIZING IN AND AROUND THE ENGINEERING INDUSTRY. THE REACTION OF THE SHOP-STEWARDS MOVEMENT WITHIN THE AUEW, KNOWN AS A SOURCE OF MILITANT CRITICISM OF THE LEADERSHIP, MAY WELL POSE SOME PROBLEMS IN THE FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE AUEW HAS LASTED FOR ALMOST A YEAR NOW. THE FINAL RESULT WAS ANNOUNCED MAY 2 AND SHOWED A SURPRISINGLY CONVINCING VICTORY FOR TERRY DUFFY. DUFFY, 55, A PRACTICING CATHOLIC AND FORMER SHOP STEWARD IN THE AEROSPACE INDUSTRY SPRANG FROM OBSCURITY IN 1975 WHEN, AS AN ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL ORGANIZER NEAR BIRMINGHAM, HE INFLICTED A SPECTACULAR DEFEAT ON WRIGHT WHO HAD BEEN POPULARIZED AS SCANLON'S PROSPECTIVE SUCCESSOR. ALTHOUGH SINCE PICTURED AS AN INEPT BUMBLER, DUFFY WAS THE CHOICE OF THE AUEW "RIGHT" LARGELY AS A RESULT OF THE PAUCITY OF "MODERATE" CANDIDATES. DUFFY IS AN OUTSPOKEN ANTI-COMMUNIST. THE RIGHT-WING MACHINE (HEADED BY GENERAL SECRETARY JOHN BOYD) HOPED FOR THE BEST AND WORKED FOR A LARGE VOTE WHICH IN THE AUEW
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USUALLY FAVORS THE "RIGHT". DUFFY'S 46,917 MAJORITY OVER THE "BROAD LEFT" CANDIDATE BOB WRIGHT (169,168 VOTES TO 122,251) HOWEVER EVEN SURPRISED DUFFY'S SUPPORTERS IN AN ELECTION THAT WAS ALWAYS EXPECTED TO BE CLOSE. THE ELECTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE (HELD SIMULTA-NEOUSLY) ALSO SHOWED A VICTORY FOR THE RIGHT, SHIFTING THE EXISTING FOUR-TO-THREE MAJORITY TO SIX-TO-ONE SINCE A WELL ESTABLISHED COMMUNIST MEMBER, LES DIXON, WAS ALSO DEFEATED. THE TURNOUT IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WAS ALSO UNEXPECTEDLY HIGH AT 32.2 PERCENT OF THE ELIGIBLE MEMBERSHIP OF 905,258. THIS LARGER-THAN-USUAL TURNOUT IS VERY MUCH A RESULT OF THE RECENTLY INNOVATED POSTAL BALLOTING ELECTION METHOD WITHIN THE UNION; THE METHOD TRADITIONALLY FAVORS RIGHT-WING CANDIDATES. WHEN DUFFY VACATES HIS COUNCIL SEAT TO TAKE OVER FROM SCANLON, EVEN IF A "LEFT WINGER" OR COMMUNIST IS ELECTED, THE "RIGHT" WILL STILL HAVE A COMFORTABLE MAJORITY -- WITH JOHN BOYD IN CONTROL OF THE AUEW ADMINISTRATION AND JOURNAL.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AUEW PRESIDENTIAL ROLE IN THE BRITISH TRADE UNION MOVEMENT IS INDICATED BY THE

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y TEXT TO PARA 3 SECTION 2

ROLE OF THE UNION ITSELF. THE AUEW IS THE SECOND LARGEST UNION IN THE COUNTRY, AND THE LARGEST RECRUITING PRIMARILY SKILLED WORKERS. THE AUEW ENGINEERING SECTION WIELDS ALMOST 1.2 MILLION VOTES AT THE TUC. THE RIGIDLY DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES OF THE UNION IMPOSE CONSTRAINTS UPON THE INDIVIDUAL POWER OF THE PRESIDENT, BUT IN THE INTERNAL MACHINATIONS OF THE TUC THE PRESIDENT CAN CUT A FORCEFUL FIGURE. THE POWER BASE OF THE UNION HAS BEEN USED TO GREAT EFFECT OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS BY THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT, HUGH SCANLON. SCANLON, A RADICAL FIREBRAND WHEN ELECTED, HAS BEEN AN IMMENSE INFLUENCE ON BRITISH TRADE UNION POLICY DURING HIS DECADE IN OFFICE. HE AND HIS UNION WERE IN THE FORE-FRONT OF THE UNION CAMPAIGN TO RENDER THE 1971 INDUS-TRIAL RELATIONS ACT INOPERATIVE, AND LATER, HE WAS AN UNSWERVING SUPPORTER OF THE LABOR GOVERNMENT ELECTED IN 1974. THE REASONS FOR THE INFLUENCE SCANLON HAS HAD ARE BOTH PERSONAL (HE IS A FORCEFUL AND PERSUASIVE PERFORMER ON A PUBLIC PLATFORM) AND RELATED TO THE FACT THAT HE IS THE ELECTED SPOKESMAN FOR THE SECOND LARGEST UNION IN THE NATION. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY THEREFORE IF DUFFY WILL EXERT A SIMILAR DEGREE OF
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PERSUASIVE INFLUENCE OVER HIS COLLEAGUES. WHAT IS CERTAIN IS THAT THE INTERNAL BALANCE OF THE AUEW LEADER-SHIP HAS BEEN MOVED SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE "IGHT" BY THESE ELECTIONS.

3. TERRY DUFFY IS KNOWN AS AN ABLE, IF PEDESTRIAN, OFFICIAL WHO STILL HAS A LOT TO LEARN AS A NEGOTIATOR AND LEADER. HE IS COMMITTED TO EXAMINING THE I TERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE AUEW WHICH AT THE MOME T IS A DIS-JOINTED FEDERATION OF FOUR INDIVIDUAL SEITITNS REPRE-SENTING WORKERS IN THE ENGINEERING INDUSTRY (THE ORIGINAL AEU), IONSTRUCTION, FOUNDRIES, AND WHITE COLLAR TRADES. THE AMALGAMATION HAS NOT HAD A PEACEFUL HISTORY AND FRICTION IS CONSTANTLY EXPERIENCED WITH THE LEFT-WING WHITE COLLAR SECTION, THE TECHNICALW ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPERVISORY STAFFS OR AUEW (TASS). THE FUTURE OF TASS WITHIN THE FEDERATION MAY BE ENDANGERED BY THE ELECTION OF DUFFY, THOUGH THIS WILL NOT UNDULY WORRY ITS COMMU-NIST GENERAL SECRETARY KEN GILL.

4. HOWEVER, MORE IMPORTANT CHANGES IN THE SHAPE OF THE BRITISH TRADE UNION MOVEMENT COULD RESULT FROM DUFFY'S ELEVATION TO NATIONAL PROMINENCE. HE HAS ANNOUNCED HIS INTENTION "TO EXAMINE THE POSSIBILITIES OF RATIONAL AMALGAMATIONS". IT IS KNOWN THAT THE TARGETS FOR SUCH AMALGAMATIO S WOULD STRENGTHEN THE RIGHT-WING LEADERSHIP. A PRIMARY CONCERN FOR DUFFY IS LIKELY TO BE AN ACCOM-MODATION WITH FRANK CHAPPLE'S 450,000 ELECTRICIANS AND PLUMBERS UNION (EEPTU). BUT AGREEMENT ON AMALGAMATION STILL FACES SEVERE PROBLEMS (NOT LEAST THE JOB SECURITY OF EXISTING EEPTU NATIONAL OSFICERS). THE EEPTU HAS ALSO BEEN DISCUSSING A POSSIBLE MERGER WITH THE "MODERATE" UCATT, THE 300,000-MEMBER CTNSTRUCTION TRADES
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UNION. OTHER OVERTURES HAVE BEEN MADE BY THE AUEW TO THE SHEETMETAL WORKERS AND THE METAL MECHANICS, TWO SMALL UNIO S TF CRASTSMEN THAT WOULE STRENGTHEN THE STLIDARITY OF THE SKILLED WORKERS IN THE ENLINEEING INDUSTRY AGAINST THE INCREASING ENCROACHMENT OF HIGHLY UNIFIED SEMI- AND UNSKILLED WORKERS REPRESENTED PRIMARILY BY THE T&GWU. IF THESE AMALGAMATIO S WEE SUCIESSSUL WKA D

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IT IS MUCH TOO EARLY TO GIVE AN INFORMED ESTIMATE OF THE PROBABILITY OF SUCCESS), THE AUEW WOULD OVERTAKE THE T&GWU AS THE LARGEST UNION AND WOULD ALSO INCREASE ITS VOICE WITHIN THE TUC.

5. IN THE MORE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, NEWS OF DUFFY'S ELECTION WILL HEARTEN OTHER TRADE UNION MODERATES AND WILL NO DOUBT ENCOURAGE THE GOVERNMENT. THE APPOINTMENT DOES NOT TAKE EFFECT UNTIL OCTOBER AND WILL THEREFORE BE OF NO DIRECT HELP IN THE FORMULATION OF GOVERNMENT-TUC UNDERSTANDING ON PAY, THOUGH DUFFY IS LIKELY TO BE MORE AMENABLE TO SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT THAN HIS DEFEATED OPPONENT, BOB WRIGHT. WHAT WILL HEARTEN THE GOVERNMENT IS THE NEWS THAT IT WILL HAVE AN ALLY AT THE HEAD OF THE AUEW -- SOMEONE WHO IS WILLI G TO BE PERSUADED TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC STRATEGY. THUS, FOLLOWING THE RETIREMENT OF BOTH OF THE SENIOR UNION LEADERS, JACK JONES AND HUGH SCANLON, WITHIN THE SPACE OF SIX MONTHS, THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT BE UNHAPPY WITH THE NEW FACE AT THE AUEW. WHAT MAY BE LESS ENCOURAGING IS THE POSSIBLE REACTION FROM MILITANT SHOP STEWARDS WITHIN THE AUEW. IN THE PAST, STEWARDS REPRESENTING
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SKILLED ENGINEERING WORKERS HAVE BEEN HIGHLY CRITICAL OF THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF THEIR UNION AND HAVE FREQUENTLY UNDERTAKEN UNOFFICIAL ACTION IN THE FACE OF

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PRESIDENTIAL PLEADINGS. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN IF
MR. DUFFY CAN OVERCOME AND PLACATE THE TRADITIONAL
MILITANCY OF THE STEWARDS WITHIN SOME SECTIONS OF HIS
UNION.

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